Draft Environmental Assessment
Salmon Lake State Park
Forest Health Improvement Project

August 2020

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

Region 2
3201 Spurgin Rd, Missoula, MT 59804

Project Overview

Proposal

Salmon Lake State Park (SLSP) is Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) land managed by the Region 2 FWP Parks division. SLSP provides public access to natural resources for activities such as camping, angling, boating, wildlife-viewing, hiking, swimming, and picnicking. The park includes 2 main areas: the campground and the day-use and boat-launch area. Park campground infrastructure improvements include a comfort station (with flush toilets, sinks and showers), vault latrines, and trash service. There are also potable water spigots throughout the campground, 30- and 50-amp electrical pedestals at 16 of the 23 campsites, a designated hike- and bicycle-camp area, and a hiking trail. The day-use area includes a boat ramp, parking areas for trucks and trailers as well as single vehicles, 2 boat docks, a swim dock at a designated swim beach area, and sheltered and non-sheltered picnic tables. Currently, SLSP's campground is open seasonally from May 1 until September 30. The park's day-use and boat ramp area is open May 1 until November 30 (weather permitting).

FWP's forest management plan[1] (2018) directs FWP to manage forested parks for public use and recreational values. Public safety, aesthetics, and visual screening are priorities for forest management in developed areas. Beyond developed areas and of secondary priority are insect and disease management, fire hazard mitigation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other recreational opportunities.

FWP is proposing to conduct forest management treatments on approximately 30 acres of its 42-acre SLSP in Missoula County in Region 2 (Figure 1). The treatments would involve the removal of primarily conifer trees (both of merchantable and nonmerchantable value) for the purpose of mitigating hazard trees in developed areas, reducing hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface (WUI), and increasing resiliency of forested areas to insects and diseases. Section 8, Narrative Summary below, includes a detailed description of the proposed action.

Area Description

Salmon Lake State Park is located 8 miles south of Seeley Lake in Missoula County, along the west side of Montana Highway 83. The 42-acre park lies along the eastern shoreline of Salmon Lake. SLSP has a campground as well as a day-use area. Due to its popularity among campers, boaters, and anglers and its proximity to Missoula, SLSP Park sees high-use during mid-spring through early fall.

The park is dominated by mature ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and western larch (Figure 2). As evidenced by the "springboard stumps"[2], the area was originally logged in the early 20th century. Since that time, there is little evidence of significant logging or fire occurrence in the stands. The trees that were established or released from the original logging have developed into the mature well-stocked overstory stand that is present today. Bark beetle infestation (both Douglas-fir bark beetle and mountain pine beetle) combined with root compaction, drought, environmental stress, and root disease over past decades has resulted in a gradual decline in tree vigor and some mortality throughout the park with a decline in new tree germination and recruitment. Past and ongoing FWP management has focused on hazard tree removal but the overall health and vigor has not been adequately addressed. Trees in the park remain at an elevated risk of mortality from bark beetles, disease, and potentially crown fire. The average age of the stands is approximately 100 years. The average density is approximately 120-square-feet of basal area (BA) per acre (live), ranging from 40 to 200 BA/ac. The topography includes flat benches, where the majority of campsite and facility development occurs, as well as steep pitches adjacent to Salmon Lake.

[1] Available upon request from R2 FWP (Missoula) or FWP Wildlife (Helena) office.
[2] Historic manual-logging method that involved loggers chopping a slot or notch in a large tree trunk and then inserting a wooden plank on which the logger stood while sawing the tree.

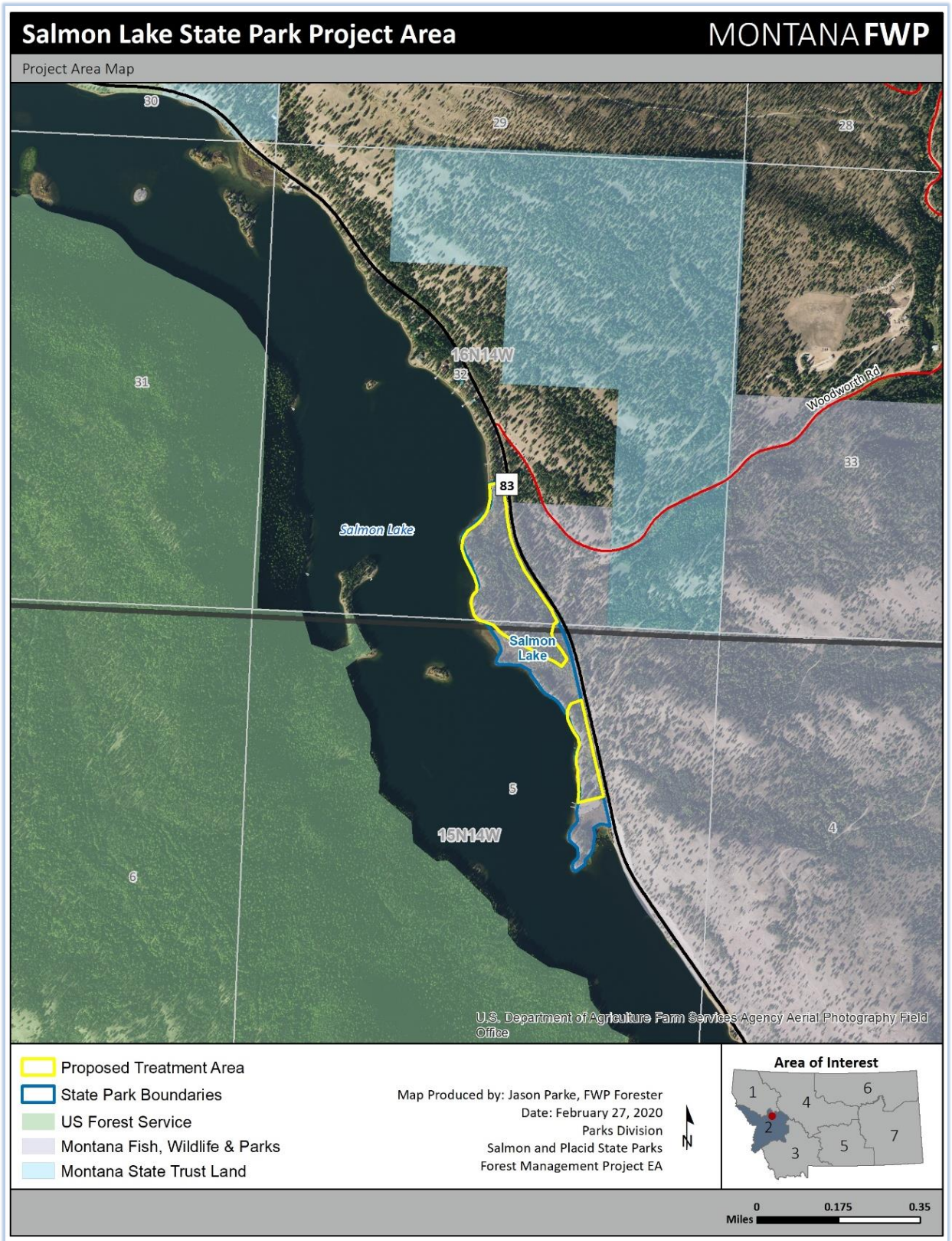

Figure 1. Salmon Lake State Park location and project area map.

Figure 2. A view of a portion of the proposed treatment area near the entrance of the Salmon Lake State Park campground, looking west into the park from the entrance.

MEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of proposed state action:
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to conduct forest management treatments on approximately 30 acres of forest at Salmon Lake State Park in FWP Region 2 (Figure 1). The treatments would involve the removal of conifer trees (both of merchantable and nonmerchantable value) through a combination of mechanized and non-mechanized methods. Section 8, Narrative Summary, includes a detailed description of the proposed action.

2. Agency authority for the proposed action:
FWP is authorized by law to own and manage lands as state parks. The land subject to this proposal is included in Salmon Lake State Park.

§ 87-1-201(9)(a)(iv) and § 87-1-621, Montana Code Annotated (MCA)
FWP is required to implement programs that address fire mitigation, pine beetle infestation, and wildlife habitat enhancement, giving priority to forested lands in excess of 50 contiguous acres in any State Park, Fishing Access Site, or Wildlife Management Area under the department's jurisdiction. The Montana Legislature has provided FWP the means to accrue revenue from forest management activities and spend that revenue to fund further management projects on its forested lands.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Forest Management Plan (2018)
The FWP Forest Management Plan directs FWP to manage for desired habitat conditions and public use opportunities while maintaining the ecological integrity of forests. The plan provides a framework for developing desired future conditions (DFCs), identifies mechanical and non-mechanical treatments as management tools to achieve DFCs, and establishes guidelines for implementing forestry treatments on FWP forested lands.

§ 23-1-126, MCA, The Good Neighbor Policy of Public Land Use
As applied to public recreational land, the Good Neighbor Policy seeks to limit impacts to adjoining private and public recreational land from noxious weeds, trespass, litter, noise and light pollution, streambank erosion, and loss of privacy.

3. Name of project: Salmon Lake State Park Forest Health Improvement Project

4. Anticipated schedule:
Estimated Commencement Date: 11/01/2020

Estimated Completion Date: By 04/15/2021. The operating periods for most work would be completed during the fall (October) through early spring (April) in order to minimize disturbance to users and conduct potentially ground-disturbing activities under dry, frozen, and/or snow-covered ground conditions.

Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 5%

5. Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):
Salmon Lake State Park (Figure 1); Missoula County
Portions of Township 15 North, Range 14 West, Section 5, and T16N, R14W, Section 32.

6. Project size--estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

	Acres		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	0
Residential	0		
Industrial	0	(e) Productive:	
(existing shop area)		Irrigated cropland	0
(b) Open Space/	0	Dry cropland	0
Woodlands/Recreation		Forestry	30
(c) Wetlands/Riparian	0	Rangeland	0
Areas		Other	0

7. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

(b) Funding:

Agency Name: Montana FWP

Funding Amount: Costs to FWP for these forest management treatments would be covered by grant funding. Any revenue in excess of project costs would be deposited into the account to implement further forest management activities pursuant to the provisions of § 87-1-201(9)(a)(iv).

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	Cultural and Historic Resources
Missoula County Weed District	Noxious weed control
Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation	Fire Protection

8. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:

FWP is proposing to conduct forest management treatments on approximately 30 acres of Salmon Lake State Park with the purpose of:

- Removing hazard trees that pose a threat to public safety, forest health, park property, and park infrastructure.
- Reducing the potential for hazard trees to develop by maintaining or enhancing individual tree and stand-level resilience and resistance to stressors and damaging agents (e.g., drought, insects and disease, wildfire).
- Reducing hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface (WUI).
- Improving and maintaining aesthetics (e.g., shade, noise and visual buffering, etc.) by promoting:
    - desirable trees with healthy and full crowns,
    - large trees (relatively large bole diameter and height),
    - western larch and ponderosa pine over Douglas-fir as these species are pioneer species and are more resistant to insects and disease, and

    - removal of undesirable and suppressed trees that are competing with desirable trees.
- Selling any resulting merchantable timber byproducts to offset treatment costs and potentially generate revenue for the FWP Forest Management Account.

Forest management treatments are expected to benefit:

- Safety of the public in the short-term through removal of immediate hazard trees and in the long-term by promoting healthy and vigorous trees and stand conditions that would be more resilient to stressors and damaging agents.
- Park infrastructure (fences, signs, structures, toilet facilities, etc.) within developed areas that could be damaged by falling branches or trees.
- Neighboring lands and structures that may be affected by hazardous fuels in the event of a wildfire.
- Natural aesthetics of the state park.
- A variety of wildlife species that depend on open-stand conditions (e.g., species that forage on understory grasses, forbs, and shrubs).
- FWP operations and maintenance funding through reduced costs of mitigating hazard trees by addressing the underlying forest health issues that lead to the development of hazard trees (i.e., tree mortality) and potentially through revenue generated through forest product sales to treat additional State Parks in the future.

Forest management treatments would include approximately 30 acres of selective tree removal including both trees with merchantable and nonmerchantable value. Tree planting would also be implemented in small openings created by tree removal. In silvicultural terms, these types of forest treatments would be categorized as sanitation and improvement cutting. Trees selected for removal would be based on the goals of the project that specifically include:

- Removing hazardous trees that pose a threat to public safety, property or improvements.
- Removing trees affected by insects or diseases that have the potential to become hazards in the future.
    - Dead, standing trees ("snags") would be retained for their wildlife value, such as for cavity nesting birds, where they do not pose a threat to public safety, park property, or park infrastructure
- Removing suppressed and intermediate trees that are competing with desirable dominant and codominant trees for resources (sunlight, nutrients, and water). Removal of suppressed and intermediate trees would be expected to reduce the potential for insect- and disease-induced mortality of the remaining trees.
- Removing trees that contribute to the potential for crown fire including ladder fuels that form vertical layers that can allow surface fires to ascend into overstory tree crowns in the event of a wildfire.
- Removing additional trees to reduce competition stress and create a more vigorous and resilient stand condition overall.

FWP would mark trees the trees to be removed with tree paint or flagging based on the removal criteria described above. Tree removal would be accomplished through a combination of mechanized and non-mechanized methods. Merchantable trees would be treated with ground-based logging equipment, such as feller-bunchers and skidders that would cut and skid (move) trees to designated roadside locations ("landings"). Tree stems would be delimbed and processed into logs. Logs would be loaded onto log

trucks and hauled to local forest product manufacturing facilities. Nonmerchantable trees (trees too small to be manufactured into forest products) would be treated by mastication or felled with chainsaws. Slash (the nonmerchantable limbs and treetops) and cull material generated from this process would be treated either through lop and scatter, piling and burning, grinding or chipping, and/or removing the material from the site.

Ground disturbance is expected on skid trails and at landing areas. Any ground disturbance (exposed, displaced, or compacted soils) would be rehabbed and seeded with an appropriate native grass and plant seed mix. Contractors hired to do this work would be required to adhere to Montana Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs). FWP would develop a site-specific treatment plan for the project with contractors hired to do this work. The treatment plan would identify resource protection measures to minimize impacts to the site. FWP would oversee the activities while they are ongoing to ensure compliance with the plan and to minimize resource impacts.

Access to Salmon Lake State Park is from two existing access roads connecting directly to Highway 83. The operating period for the proposed treatments is anticipated to be conducted between October 1 through April 15 in order to minimize impacts to wildlife, soil and state park visitors. Ground-based logging equipment would be restricted to operate under relatively dry, frozen, or snow-covered conditions in order to minimize impacts to soil and vegetation. Other clean-up and rehab activities, such as slash treatment, grass seeding, and tree planting would be short duration (1 to 2 days) and could potentially occur throughout the operating period. If slash is piled and burned, burn piles would be in openings away from residual trees and neighboring property lines. Burning would be conducted in accordance with open burning seasons and applicable state and county regulations.

Road work and logging activities would comply with Montana Forestry BMPs and the Montana Streamside Management Zone law. To minimize the spread of noxious weeds, all equipment would be cleaned and inspected by FWP before moving onto the FWP lands. Exposed bare mineral soils would be reseeded immediately and any weed infestations would be treated with herbicides indefinitely through annual State Parks weed management efforts.

9. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

Alternative A: No Action

FWP would not conduct the proposed forest health improvement (management) activities under this alternative. Forest succession and competition among trees for limited resources (nutrients, sunlight, and water) would continue, leading to decreased stand vigor and potential for individual trees and stands of trees to be less resilient to stressors and damaging agents. Maintenance costs may increase over time as more trees die and increasingly pose threats to public safety, property, and improvements. Dead and downed fuels may increase, and as new trees regenerate in gaps created from overstory mortality, ladder fuels may also increase leading to hazardous fuel buildup. Dead and downed trees may negatively affect the aesthetics of the park and make walking through the park more difficult for visitors. Higher stand densities and increased dead and downed wood may increase habitat availability for species that depend on that condition while potentially negatively affecting species that depend on more open-stand conditions. No timber would be sold to potentially generate revenue for the FWP forest management account.

FWP's State Parks maintenance staff would continue a reactive approach to mitigating hazard trees and would continue to maintain the infrastructure in the park.

Alternative B: Proposed Action

Conduct forested habitat treatments on approximately 30 acres of the park as described in the Narrative Summary (Section 8). Following this action, FWP anticipates that hazard trees would be mitigated, tree vigor and resilience to insects and diseases would be improved, hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface would be reduced, park aesthetics would be improved, and the sale of timber may generate revenue for the FWP forest management account.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		Yes	1.b
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other (list)		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1.b. Logging activity may disturb and compact soil, potentially temporarily impacting vegetation. To minimize these effects, FWP would limit ground-based equipment operating only during periods when soils are relatively dry, frozen or snow-covered and any bare soils would be reseeded with a native grass seed mix.

2. AIR Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			X		Yes	2.a
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X		Yes	2.b
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		X				
f. Other		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2.a,b. Slash and residual byproduct generated during the proposed treatments may be burned on-site. To minimize these effects, burning of slash would comply with Missoula County open burning timing restrictions and comply with inter-agency slash treatment regulations.

3. **WATER** Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		Yes	3.b
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?			X		Yes	3.h
I. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		X				
m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				
n. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3.b Treating the subject stands may slightly alter the rate and volume of surface flow and water infiltration into the ground from snowmelt and rain events due to newly exposed soil and recovering vegetation. However, given the limited scale of the project and condition of adjacent stands, this effect is expected to be minor and temporary.

3.h Fluid spills or leaks from heavy equipment brought in to conduct the proposed treatments has the potential to result in surface or ground water contamination. To minimize this risk, FWP would conduct inspections of the contractor's equipment prior to move-in to ensure no leaks are present and would continue to inspect equipment regularly while operations are ongoing. FWP also contractually requires its contractors to abide by state laws regarding spill reporting and clean-up.

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		Yes	4.a
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X		Yes	4.b
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	4.e
f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4.a,b. Part of the project intent is to improve forest vigor and reduce the susceptibility of the treated stands to insects, diseases, and crown fire. The proposed action would thin forest stands, reducing competition stress of the residual vegetation within the treatment units. Forest thinning would support growth of shrubs and other deciduous vegetation by opening the canopy and allowing more sunlight to reach the forest floor. Please see Section 8 above for a more detailed description of proposed treatments.

4.e. Ground disturbance from logging activities may create potential for sites for noxious weeds to become established. Noxious weed spread would be mitigated by requiring equipment to be washed before entering the park, minimizing ground disturbance, immediately reseeding disturbed areas, and treating affected areas or areas at risk with herbicide for at least 3 years following the treatment.

5. FISH / WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?			X		Yes	5.b
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X		Yes	5.c
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X		Yes	5.g
h. For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		X				
I. For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X				
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife:

5.b. Relatively few game animals use the park during high-visitation seasons due to human disturbance and infrastructure developments. During the off-season, the park is occasionally used by deer and mountain grouse. The proposed treatments would not significantly negatively affect the diversity or abundance of these species. Opening the forest canopy may promote the growth of more forage and shrubs species that could increase use of the park by deer and other grazing animals in the future. Forestry activities, including the removal of younger Douglas-fir, are likely to attract white-tailed deer to these sites for the period of operation, increasing their abundance. The increase of white-tailed deer abundance and the proximity of these sites to Montana Highway 83, may increase roadkill in the area.

5.c. Forest management activities would benefit some nongame species and negatively impact others. Overall, the relatively short duration of this project and the timing of the work would have minimal impacts on nongame species. Removal of ladder fuels, hazard trees, and understory tree growth will cause a slight shift in the community of nongame species that use the park's natural resources. However, these changes are not expected to significantly negatively impact any threatened or endangered species or state Species of Concern, nor the biodiversity of the park overall. Likely, there will be a shift towards species more dependent on an open forest canopy and understory deciduous vegetation growth, and there may be a net benefit to a wide variety of bird and small mammal species that rely on multi-story stands of deciduous vegetation for nesting and foraging. Some more secretive species may avoid the park as they would be more visible to humans, but this effect is expected to be minor. The removal of snags that are identified as hazard trees may remove foraging and nesting opportunities for woodpeckers, raptors, and other bird species, but the treatment plan seeks to minimize removal of dead, standing trees, and human safety at state parks is of higher priority. Cavity nesting bird and mammal species and those that forage on dead or dying trees may be negatively impacted through the removal of snags and downed timber. Additionally, early spring timber harvest may displace some bird species that establish nesting territories during that time (late-February - March; northern flickers, great horned owls, etc.). However, these species are not expected to be permanently displaced from the park. Furthermore, removal of snags in the park is not expected to diminish the resource significantly in the larger area around the park. The FWP forester and the nongame biologist would coordinate to

avoid forestry work around sensitive species and during sensitive times (e.g., nesting bald eagles and great blue herons).

g. Opening of the forest understory may increase visibility of and access to wildlife that use the park. This may cause some species to avoid the park for lack of security. However, future growth of understory vegetation would likely limit these impacts in the long-term.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE & ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		No	6.a
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?			X		No	6.b
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6.a,b. Logging and trucking equipment would increase noise levels in the project area while activities are ongoing, but these activities would occur outside of high-use seasons for the park (e.g., during the late-fall through early-spring season). Merchantable timber byproducts would be transported out of the park via existing roads within the park.

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8. **RISK / HEALTH HAZARDS** Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X			8.a
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?			X			8.c
d. For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8.a,c. Timber management activities are inherently dangerous. All contractors would be required to comply with federal and state safety standards for logging operations as established by the United States Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA; 29 Code of Federal Regulations 1910 and any other such applicable regulations promulgated by OSHA) and as required by Title 50, Chapter 71 of the Montana Code Annotated, and any regulations promulgated to implement the statutes found in that Title and Chapter of the Montana Code Annotated.

Forestry activities, including the removal of younger Douglas-fir, are likely to attract white-tailed deer to these sites for the period of operation, increasing their abundance. The increase of white-tailed deer abundance and the proximity of these sites to Montana Highway 83, may result in an increase of road-killed white-tailed deer and pose a risk to motor vehicle drivers.

9. **COMMUNITY IMPACT** Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?			X		N/A	9.c.
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?			X		N/A	9.d.
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X		Yes	9.e
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9.c,d. Jobs would be created or sustained by project work while the project is ongoing. Log hauling and contractor traffic would increase during the project. Roads and other infrastructure that would be used by contractors were designed (and would be maintained) to support commercial logging and log transport activities. Signage would be placed near the entrance of the park and where log trucks would enter public roads to alert traffic of log truck activity. According to the Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research, the harvest of a million board-feet of timber equates to roughly 10 jobs annually.

9.e.Forestry activities, including the removal of younger Douglas-fir, are likely to attract white-tailed deer to these sites for the period of operation, increasing their abundance. The increase of white-tailed deer abundance and the proximity of these sites to Montana Highway 83, may result in an increase of road-killed white-tailed deer and pose a risk to motor vehicle drivers.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?			X		N/A	10.b
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?			X		N/A	10.d
e. Define projected revenue sources			X		N/A	10.e
f. Define projected maintenance costs.			X		N/A	10.f
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10.b,d. The Project would be expected to increase state and local tax revenues from the sale of fuel, supplies, and/or equipment and from contractor employees' income. Fuel and electricity would be required to treat stands and process the timber byproduct.

10.e. Depending on the market conditions of logging and hauling costs, and delivered log prices for the timber byproduct removed, the project might generate revenue for FWP's Forest Management Account (authorized by § 87-1-621, MCA) to be used for future forest management projects.

10.f. Post-treatment maintenance costs may be incurred for slash disposal, noxious weed treatments, and tree planting. FWP would provide funding for maintenance costs from its Forest Management Account and/or Region 2 parks maintenance funds. The mitigation of hazard trees is expected to reduce the long-term maintenance burden on the Region 2 Parks Division.

11. AESTHETICS / RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?			X		N/A	11.a.
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11.a. Some treated stands would be visible from roads and developed sites within the park and, in the short term (< 3 years), aesthetics may be negatively affected until the slash and debris has been cleaned up and disturbed ground has been rehabilitated. In the long term (> 5 years), aesthetics would be improved. FWP anticipates that the crown fire risk and potential for bark beetle infestation, which would also modify the scenic vista, would be reduced.

12. CULTURAL / HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a)			X			12.d
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12.d,e. FWP has initiated a cultural resource inventory to identify and evaluate cultural and paleontological resources within the APE for this project, in accordance with the Montana Antiquities Act and associated Administrative Rules. Any cultural resources identified through this inventory will be evaluated for potential eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Any cultural resources identified as eligible to the NRHP and any paleontological resources will be avoided by all project activities. The inventory report and any eligibility recommendations for cultural sites will be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for consultation.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)			X		Yes	13.a
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		X				
g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

13.a. This project would mitigate hazardous trees, improve tree vigor and reduce susceptibility of stand to insects and diseases, reduce crown fire potential within the proposed treatment units, improve aesthetics, and potentially generate revenue for the FWP forest management account. Work proposed in this EA may compliment similar forestry work on adjacent lands, but FWP does not anticipate any cumulative negative impacts to result if this project were completed.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

FWP proposes to implement forest management activities on approximately 30 acres of forest at Salmon Lake State Park in FWP Region 2. The purpose is to address hazard trees that pose a threat to public safety, property, and improvements; improve forest stand resilience and resistance to stressors and damaging agents; reduce hazardous fuels in the wildland-urban interface; improve aesthetics; and potentially generate income for the FWP forest management account.

FWP would select trees for removal based on the criteria described in the Narrative Summary (Section 8) above. Site-specific operating plans would be developed for the areas to be treated and FWP would oversee operations while they are ongoing. Slash disposal and rehabilitation would be required as part of the contract and FWP would implement integrated noxious weed management to prevent noxious weed establishment and spread. Operations would be conducted in the late-fall through early-spring to

minimize impact to users. Ground disturbing activities would be limited to periods of relatively dry, frozen, or snow-covered conditions. Contractors would be required to adhere to Montana Forestry BMPs. The cost of the project is expected to be partially offset by the sale of timber byproducts and, depending on market conditions and logging costs, the project may generate income for the FWP forest management account.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

The public would be notified as follows of opportunities to comment on the proposed Salmon Lake State Park Forest Health Improvement Project, including its draft EA and alternatives:

- A news release would be prepared and distributed to a standard list of media outlets interested in FWP Region 2 issues. This news release would also be posted on FWP Region 2's website http://fwp.mt.gov/regions/r2/.
- One legal notice would be published in each of these newspapers: *Independent Record* (Helena), *Missoulian*, and *Seeley Swan Pathfinder* (Seeley Lake).
- Copies would be available at the FWP Region 2 Headquarters in Missoula and the FWP state headquarters in Helena.
- Copies of this environmental assessment would be mailed (or notification of its availability emailed) to neighboring landowners and other interested parties (individuals, groups, agencies) to assure their knowledge of the Proposed Action.
- Public notice on FWP's webpage: http://fwp.mt.gov ("News," then "Recent Public Notices"). The Draft EA would also be available on this website, along with the opportunity to submit comments online.

Copies of this EA may be obtained by mail from Region 2 FWP, 3201 Spurgin Rd., Missoula MT, 59804; by phoning 406-542-5540; by emailing shrose@mt.gov; or by viewing FWP's website http://fwp.mt.gov under Public Notices.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having few physical and human impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

2. Public Comment Period

The public comment period will extend for thirty (30) days beginning August 28, 2020. Comments must be received by FWP no later September 28, 2020 and can be mailed to the address below:

Region 2 FWP
Attn: Salmon Lake State Park EA
3201 Spurgin Rd
Missoula, MT 59804

or emailed to Sharon Rose at shrose@mt.gov

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

No. Based upon the above assessment which has identified a limited number of minor impacts to the physical and human environment that would be either for a short duration or can be mitigated below the level of significance, an EIS in not required and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of review.

2. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

R. Jason Parke
Forester, FWP Headquarters
P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620; (406) 444-7329

Brett Zarling
Park Ranger, FWP Region 2
PO Box 136, Seeley Lake, MT 59868; (406) 677-6804

Torrey Ritter
Nongame Wildlife Biologist, FWP Region 2
3201 Spurgin Rd, Missoula, MT 59804; (406) 542-5551

3. List of entities consulted during preparation of the EA: None.